



Meet. Share. Spark Innovation.

Dear Colleagues,

Let your faculty meetings be a time when information and conversation spark innovation.

The *ISACS Spark* is an initiative to provide our member schools with quick and engaging professional development opportunities to spark conversations in 15 minutes or less. These “sparks” can be used as food for thought or as opportunities to engage in larger conversations among peers. ISACS will be sending Sparks throughout the school year and we hope you will find them helpful in stimulating conversations around exciting research related to teaching and learning.

January’s Topic – Making a Better World

Videos:

- **Clip #1: [A Peace of My Mind, John Noltner](#)** - A Peace of My Mind is a documentary project by John Noltner, a freelance photographer based in Minneapolis. Since early 2009 he has been interviewing people from a wide range of backgrounds about what peace means to them. Many of us were fortunate enough to get to view this exhibit at the 2015 ISACS Annual Conference in St. Paul and again at the 2016 ISACS Annual Conference in Columbus. Additional information can also be found at the [A Peace of My Mind](#) website. (2:59 minutes)
- **Clip #2: [Claudia Horwitz interview](#)** - Claudia Horwitz was the founding director of Stone Circles at the Stone House, a 70-acre retreat center outside Mebane, North Carolina dedicated to the support of individuals and organizations working toward social change. Claudia's efforts grew out of an awareness that social justice work could exact a tremendous toll on individuals and her desire to make that work of building social movements more sustainable. (2:10 minutes)

- **Clip #3: [Donnie Phillips interview](#)** - Donnie Phillips lost his sight when he was 21 years old. He is a disability awareness trainer in Boston, Massachusetts, and also a poet who goes by the stage name of Uncle Third Eye. (1:49 minutes)
- **Clip #4: [John George interview](#)** - John George was living next to a crack house in Detroit. He and his wife were expecting a baby girl when he decided he better do something about it. Asked why he didn't just move away, John replied, "*We are out to change the world, and we're starting in Detroit.*" (2:10 minutes)

(Length of time for the three clips: approximately 9 minutes)

We hope these ideas ignite thinking and conversations in your school.

Regards,

The ISACS Professional Services Committee & the ISACS Professional Development Team

The ISACS Spark has been developed by the Professional Services Committee (PSC). The PSC is comprised of teacher leaders from around the region who are passionate about professional development. All sites and clips have been reviewed and deemed appropriate for sharing.

PAST SPARKS

Please visit www.isacs.org/ISACSSpark to view all previous ISACS Sparks.

December 2016 ISACS Spark

December's Spark focuses on Maximizing Learning Through Inquiry-Based and Project Based Learning (PBL). Project Based Learning (PBL) and Inquiry-Based Learning are hands-on learning approaches involving real-world problem solving and challenges in order to gain a deeper understanding. Projects become the center of the learning experience often driven by open-ended questions to guide learning experiences. Here are some inspiring videos to help you get started and a suggestion of how to evaluate the students' experiences.

Videos:

- **Clip #1: [Inquiry-Based Learning: From Teacher-Guided to Student-Driven](#)** - Ralston Elementary School is creating a culture of inquiry to nourish 21st-century learners, *Edutopia*. (5:25 minutes)
- **Clip #2: [Assessing the 4C's of Project Based Learning For All Grade Levels](#)** - [EdLeader21](#) (3:12 minutes)
- **Clip #3: [Hip Hop Genius: Remixing High School Education](#)** - Sam Seidel is the director of the student experience lab at the Business Innovation Factory and author of *Hip Hop Genius: Remixing High School Education* Seidel speaks internationally about innovative solutions to challenges facing schools, community organizations, and prisons. (4:23 minutes)
- **Clip #4: [Marc Lamont Hill on Using Hip-Hop in the Classroom](#)** - Marc Lamont Hill on using hip-hop as an innovative learning tool in the classroom. Marc Lamont Hill is an American academic, journalist, author, activist, and television personality. (1:32 minutes)

(Length of time for the four clips: approximately 14 minutes)

November 2016 ISACS Spark

November's Spark focuses on the Changing Path to College Admissions (and beyond!). The fall, November specifically, is a stressful times for high school seniors (and their families) in the college admission process. Many

early applications to colleges are evaluated and decisions begin to be sent to applicants at this time. As this process can be stressful to all, It may helpful to hear about new thinking in the path to college acceptance.

Videos:

- **Clip #1:** [New report suggests ways to revolutionize college admissions](#) - Administrators from top colleges and universities are endorsing a report from the Harvard Graduate School of Education that could fundamentally change the college admission process. "Turning the Tide" examines the college application system and offers specific improvements. (5 minutes)
- **Clip #2:** [Where You Go Is Not Who You Will Be](#) - Frank Bruni discusses his book and the madness of the college admission process. (8:25 minutes)
- **Clip #3:** [Is Middle School Too Early to Talk about College?](#) - How soon is too soon to talk about college? Can middle schoolers begin to take steps to prepare for college? What can parents do now to give their kids the option to go to college? (2:08 minutes)
- **Clip #4:** [College Admission Standards Changing to Emphasize Community Service](#) - As high school students wait to find out if they got accepted, dozens of schools announce wide sweeping reforms. (8:33 minutes)

(Length of time for the four clips: approximately 24 minutes)

Additional articles of interest:

- [Before You Scream at Your School Counselor](#), *Huffington Post*
- [7 Reasons why You Shouldn't Go To College and 4 Things to Do Instead](#), *Huffington Post*

October 2016 ISACS Spark

October's Spark focuses on Parent Teacher Conferences. In many schools, this is the time for Parent Teacher Conferences. Are you prepared for difficult conversations you might have with parents or students regarding their progress? Here are some suggestions to consider as you prepare for upcoming conversations.

Videos:

- **Clip #1:** [Having Difficult Conversations with Parents, National College for Teaching and Leadership](#) - Dr Fiona Davidson shares her top tips on how to prepare for and conduct difficult conversations with parents effectively. Some conversations, by their very nature can be challenging, but by planning ahead and following a few best practice principles, they needn't be a cause for anxiety. (5:19 minutes)
- **Clip #2:** [Michael Grose interview with Steve Francis, Happy Schools](#) - Steve Francis from Happy Schools and Michael Grose discuss how to have difficult conversations with parents, how to listen, understand, and make a plan for how to resolve the issue. (4:59 minutes)

(Length of time for the two clips: approximately 10 minutes)

Additional article of interest:

- [10 Tips to Deal with Difficult Parents Effectively](#)

This email has been sent to heads of school, division heads, assistant/associate heads, deans of faculty, deans of studies, directors of professional development and ISACS teacher representatives.